

Happy Holidays...

December has a wonderful way of bringing people together. Young and old, our residents gather together to celebrate the holidays with peace and joy. Secaucus is very fortunate to have many diverse cultures, ethnicities, religions, and traditions. The plaza reflects some of those holidays including Christmas and Hanukkah. We have constructed a new gazebo, menorah and added a new Christmas tree. The non-religious holiday of Kwanzaa is also celebrated in December.

Last weekend, the community enjoyed the 16th annual Holiday parade and tree lighting ceremony. The weather was mild as marchers led the way for Santa and Mrs. Claus to join the festivities. Children lined up for photos with the Christmas couple in our new gazebo. The festivities gave an old fashioned nostalgic feeling to the holidays as families enjoyed horse and carriage rides, hot pretzels, cider and hot cocoa while the chorus sang Christmas carols. Children also enjoyed a petting zoo and train rides. This year, we added a bazaar to help generate shopping in our down town business district.

The holiday spirit continued as our high school students treated our seniors to breakfast and a concert at the Performing Arts Center. A good time was had by all thanks to the efforts of High School principal Dr. Bob Berckes and his staff.

Christmas, is a magical time of year when people set differences aside and spread joy to others. It is also a time for giving thanks to all those who serve throughout the year. To quote American author and historian, Washington Irving, "Christmas is the season for kindling the fire of hospitality in the hall, the genial flame of charity in the heart." Nowhere else is this more true than right here in our community. Every year the hospitality grows as our youth reach out to help our seniors or disabled, whether it is shoveling snow, volunteering at the food pantry or animal shelter, helping others in need, or entertaining residents with concerts. And in turn, our seniors give so much back to our youth and the community.

Secaucus is also blessed to have a generous corporate community. Every holiday and every event, we can always count on our local restaurants, stores, hotels and specialty companies in town to graciously offer to help. Just recently Bonefish provided Thanksgiving dinner to our homebound residents. Olive Garden fed our Veterans on Veteran's Day and Good Fella's cooked Thanksgiving lunch and the holiday breakfast for our seniors.

The holidays truly are a time for togetherness. Together with family, together with neighbors, together within the community. You never know when you may meet a new

friend, or reconnect with someone you have not seen in a long time. This is the season for spreading joy. Sometimes joy is shared through a gift to someone less fortunate, or spending quality time with an old friend, sibling or neighbor. It is an uplifting time of year where anything is possible.

Whatever your religion is, Christian, or Jewish, whether you celebrate Hanukkah, Christmas, or Kwanzaa, in the end, we all come together to celebrate the holidays, together as one communal family.

We take this time now to wish you a very Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah and Kwanzaa and a happy healthy New Year. In January we will bring you our mid-term report on all that we have achieved in our first two years as well as what is on the horizon for things to come. We assure you our community has a bright and shiny future. Continue to watch the town website, www.secaucusnj.org for updates on events and news.